Without piercing through the visible, without knowing the reality of the Self, how can men gain Freedom by mere outward words that end with utterances?

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MORAL LONGING IN KALI YUGA

THE ugly qualities of the Kali Yuga have been spreading so rapidly during recent years that hardly any portion of the earth seems immune to their influence. The description of the Black Age given in the *Vishnu Purana* (*S.D.* I, 377) no longer seems prophecy, but an account of facts so prevalent as to be almost banal in their endless repetition. Yet along with this unhappy confirmation of the relentless law of cycles there comes instructive evidence of the inveterately "moral" component in human nature. The sharpened intellectuality of Western man fills the pages of countless books and journals with criticism of the events of the day. The age is not without articulate self-reproof. Dull and insensate indeed would be the writer who could not find offenses and mistakes to point to, crimes to indict, and disorders so poorly dealt with that the remedies become seeds of a worse discontent. Taken together, these criticisms would make a catalogue of endless follies and outrages large enough to complete, not volumes, but an entire library of human wrong.

It is far better, no doubt, for the evils of the times to be recognized, even in this way, than for them to be ignored. Men would be hardly men at all, but only a peculiarly unattractive species of beast, if they were lacking in the moral sense that brings all this criticism and protest. Yet it remains a grim secret of the Kali Yuga why all this moral outcry proves so impotent when it comes to establishing currents for actual change. Even the best of the critics seem

to have an ill-concealed suspicion that what they say or do will have little effect. Why, they may sometimes wonder, should man, having the prerogatives of virtually a god—the power of choice, and of seeing the difference between good and evil—be at the same time so helpless? It must seem to some that a benumbed conscience remains the only escape from this agony, since flight from an oppressive present through alcohol and drugs has never been so popular.

What can be said of this plight? Is it that, in the middle of the fourth round, during the climax and decline of the fifth root race, there is a blending of externalizing desire with the powers of mind that generalizes the moral perception of most men at an Epimethean level—the afterthinking compunction provoked by the experience of pain?

Consider for one thing the cult of "objectivity" that has dominated Western science for generations. Here, one could say, is massive rationalization for restriction of all disciplined reasoning to the plane of effects, the region of experience where causes set in motion reach the end of the manifesting tendency, where their results take on finite, externally definable limits. A civilization wedded to this view of knowledge and reality is bound to admit moral questions into the forum of its considerations only at this last-ditch level. And it is there, also, that what were once only vague apprehensions, or feeble intuitions of wrong-doing, turn into concrete disaster and gross pain afflicting countless human beings. So it is in this region of final effects that mistakes and wrongs must at last be admitted and faced, and on this ground men called to account for what they have done.

From this point of view, we may recognize another of the dark penalties of Kali Yuga—that its materialism, having been given the dignity of a theory of knowledge, establishes the terms of the definition of what is wrong, using language which can never apply to those higher levels of causation where constructive action must originate. There is, in short, no vocabulary, no grammar, of right action, but only the melancholy and sometimes angry speech of moral condemnation of what ought not to be.

The individual, especially the one who has some acquaintance with the struggles of the disciple life, may find parallels of this collective situation in his own experience. Perhaps only after a long cycle of defeats and set-backs, he learns that he cannot risk defining himself in terms of his failures. The failures are facts and real, but

they are not the reality of his power of becoming. He cannot ignore these mistakes, but if his efforts at accounting, his reflection on the difference between what is and what ought to be, is out of balance, a flooding sense of weakness may close out his Promethean potentialities. A man who thinks mainly of what he ought *not* to do has before him only a pallid career of conformities. A revolt will come from the unused energies, and he will not be its leader. The forces of nature are never content to submit to merely negative controls. They did not emerge from the silences of the original Chaos to be so easily contained by moral timidity, and will acknowledge only the mastery of an affirmative will.

There is another way of looking at the problem. The morality of "don't" is only a response to personal longing for the good, and its image of right action is an imagined copy, not the true original. There is a part of man's nature that *needs* this sort of guidance, because it knows no better, but this is the lesser part of the human being—the part the man himself must from time to time whip into shape, like the unruly horse of the *Phaedrus* myth. Even little "do's," to go with massive "don'ts," fall into this category. Neither can be dispensed with, yet they lead only to a pious mediocrity if they are allowed to seem anything more than minor safeguards of the questing warrior-soul, whose true strength and resources are in his vision and his heart.

How can the vision of Prometheus be renewed? This is the important question, for no man, however humble, has lived without some semblance, however faint, of that vision. Its inspiration comes and goes. Much personal longing can even drive it away. This was Arjuna's difficulty, which overwhelmed him on the field of battle, as from time to time it overwhelms us. There must have been intervals when Arjuna had to learn simply to *wait,* to quiet the impatience of his human feelings, not because they were wrong or unnatural, but simply because they were *personal* and allowed no cognizance of the larger scheme of the cycle and the necessities of other souls. Who was he, after all, to release the arrows of destiny? He was not Krishna—not yet.

These mysteries have no explanation save in the often obscure counsels of the wise. Patience is not to be gained but in the service of others, which brings a forgetfulness of the impatient personality. A man may easily feel what ought not to be, and sense, less clearly, what should come about, but he seldom knows when or how.

Knowledge of cycles assists in the reconciliation which he must achieve for the incessant demands of his moral nature, which makes him a man on earth, yet it is not wisdom on earth, but only its intimation, its promise or reflection.

How We "Remember"

Our "memory" is but a general agent, and its "tablets," with their indelible impressions, but a figure of speech: the "brain-tablets" serve only as a *upadhi* or *vahan* (basis, or vehicle) for reflecting at a given moment the memory of one or another thing. The records of past events, of every minutest action, and of passing thoughts, in fact, are really impressed on the imperishable waves of the ASTRAL LIGHT, *around us* and everywhere, not in the brain alone; and these mental pictures, images, and sounds, pass from these waves *via* the *consciousness of the personal Ego* or Mind (the lower Manas) whose grosser essence is astral, into the *"cerebral reflectors,"* so to say, of our brain, whence they are delivered by the psychic to the *sensuous* consciousness. This at every moment of the day, and even during sleep. . . .

Man, in addition to the physical, has also a spiritual brain. If the former is wholly dependent for the degree of its receptivity on its own physical structure and development, it is, on the other hand, entirely subordinate to the latter, inasmuch as it is the spiritual Ego alone, and accordingly as it leans more toward its two highest principles, or towards its physical shell, that can impress more or less vividly the outer brain with the perception of things purely spiritual or immaterial. Hence it depends on the acuteness of the mental feelings of the inner Ego, on the degree of spirituality of its faculties, to transfer the impression of the scenes its semi-spiritual brain perceives, the words it hears and what it feels, to the sleeping physical brain of the outer man. The stronger the spirituality of the faculties of the latter, the easier it will be for the Ego to awake the sleeping hemispheres, arouse into activity the sensory ganglia and the cerebellum, and to impress the former—always in full inactivity and rest during the deep sleep of man with the vivid picture of the subject so transferred.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

STUDIES IN THE UPANISHADS

BY A STUDENT

MANY American theosophists are asking, "What are the Upanishads?" They are a portion of the ancient Aryan literature which this journal has set itself to help lay before theosophists of America, to the end that whatever in them is good and true may be brought out. As Max Müller says, hitherto the Upanishads have not received at the hands of Sanskrit and oriental scholars, that treatment which in the eyes of philosophers and theologians they seem so fully to deserve. He also calls them "ancient theosophic treatises" and declares that his real love for Sanskrit literature was first kindled by them.[1] They have received no treatment at all in the United States, because they are almost absolutely unknown in the original tongue in this country, and in translations, have been but little studied here. Europe and America differ in this, that while in England and Germany nearly all such study is confined to the book-worm or the theologian, here there is such a general diffusion of pretty fair education in the people, that the study of these books, as translated, may be made popular, a thing which in Europe is perhaps impossible.

Müller returned to the study of the Upanishads after a period of thirty years, during which he had devoted himself to the hymns and Brahmanas of the Vedas, and found his interest in them undiminished. As for the period of these treatises, he says that has been fixed *provisionally,* at about 800 B.C.

The word means "secret charm," "philosophical doctrine"; and more strictly, "to sit down near." Hindu theologians say the Upanishads belong to revealed religion in opposition to that which is traditional. In the opinion of our friend Müller, to whom all Western students must ever remain grateful no matter how much they may disagree with his views as to the Vedas being the lispings of baby man, "the earliest of these philosophical treatises will always maintain a place in the literature of the world, among the most astound-

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[1] *Sacred Books of the East,* 1, 65.

ing productions of the human mind in any age and in any country."[2]

Professor Weber placed the number of Upanishads at 235[3]; in 1865 Müller put them at 149, and others add to that number, so that even today the actual figures are not known. Indeed it is held by several Orientalists, that before they assumed their present form, a large mass of traditional Upanishads must have existed.

The meaning of the word which ought to be borne most in mind is, "secret knowledge, or true knowledge" although there may be a Upanishad or secret knowledge, which is false.

In the Chandogya Upanishad (I, 1) after describing the deeper meaning of OM, it is said that the sacrifice which a man performs with knowledge, with faith, and with the Upanishad, *i.e.* with an understanding of the secret charm, or underlying principles and effects, is more powerful than when with faith, the only knowledge possessed is of the rites themselves, their origin and regularity. The sacrifice referred to is, not alone the one offered on the altar in the temple, but that daily sacrifice which every breath and every thought, brings about in ourselves.

THE MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

This is in the ATHARVA VEDA. Although it has the form of a mantra, it is not to be used in the sacrifices, as its sole object is to teach the highest knowledge, the knowledge of Brahman, which cannot be obtained by either worship or sacrifices. Offerings to the Gods, in no matter what mode or church, restraining of the breath, penances, or cultivation of the psychic senses, will not lead to the true knowledge. Yet some works have to be performed, and many persons require works, sacrifices and penances as stepping stones to a higher life. In the progress of these works and sacrificial performances, errors are gradually discovered by the individual himself. He can then remove them. So the Hindu commentators have explained the title of this Upanishad as the "shaving" one. That is, it cuts off the errors of the mind like a razor. It is said by European scholars that the title has not yet been explained. This may be quite correct for them, but it is very certain the Hindu explanation appears to the Hindu mind to be a very good one. Let us proceed.

FIRST MUNDAKA

This means, first shaving, or beginning of the process for remov-

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[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 67.

[3] *Hist. of Sans. Lit.*, p. 155, note.

ing error. It may be considered as a division equivalent to "first title," after which follow the lesser divisions, as: FIRST KHANDA.

1. Brahma was the first of the Devas, the maker of the universe, the preserver of the world. He told the knowledge of Brahman, the foundation of all knowledge, to his eldest son Atharva.

Here at once should be noted, that although in Hindu theology we find Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, as the creator, preserver and destroyer, forming the Trinity, the Upanishad now before us—for cutting away error—has not such a division. It says Brahma is first, also the maker and the preserver. Even knowledge that is true for certain stages of development becomes error when we rise up into the higher planes and desire to know the true. Similarly we find Buddha in his congregation teaching his disciples by means of the "three vehicles," but when he had raised them to the higher plane, he informed them that these vehicles might be discarded and SAT or truth be approached through one vehicle.

The knowledge here spoken of is Brahman knowledge which is the supreme vehicle.

2. Whatever Brahma told Atharvan that knowledge Atharvan told to Angir, he told it to Satyavaha Bharadvaga, and he in succession told it to Angiras.

3. Saunaka, the great householder, approached Angiras respectfully and asked "Sir, what is that through which if it is known, everything else becomes known?"

4. He said to him: "Two kinds of knowledge must be known, this is what all who know Brahman tell us, the higher and the lower knowledge.

5. "The lower knowledge is the Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, Atharva-Veda, Phonetics, Ceremonial, Grammar, Etymology, Metre and Astronomy; but the higher knowledge is that by which the Indestructible (Brahma) is apprehended.

6. "That which cannot be seen nor seized, which has no origin and is without qualities, no eyes nor ears, no hands nor feet, the eternal, the all pervading, infinitesimal, that which is imperishable, that is what is regarded by the wise as the source of all beings.

7. "As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow on the earth, as from every man hairs spring forth on the head and the body, thus does everything arise here from the Indestructible.

8. "The Brahman swells by means of meditation; hence is produced matter; from matter mind, breath and intellect, the seven

worlds, and from the works performed by men in the worlds, the eternal effects, rewards and punishment of works.

9. "From Him who perceives all and who knows all, whose meditation consists of knowledge, from that highest Brahman is born that other Hiranyagarbha—name, form, and matter."

This Khanda unfolds broadly the whole philosophy. The following ones go into particulars. It is very easy here to see that the imperishable doctrine could not be communicated directly by the Great Brahma to man, but it has to be filtered down through various channels. The communicator of it to mortals, however, would be regarded by his finite auditors as a god. The same method is observable in the Bhagavad-Gita (ch. 4) where Krishna says to Arjuna that "this never failing doctrine I formerly taught unto Vivaswat and he to Manu, who told it to Ikswaku, succeeding whom came the Rajarshis who studied it." Manu is regarded as of a wholly Divine nature although not the Great Brahm.

Now, when Angiras, as detailed in the Upanishad, had received this higher knowledge, he was approached by a great householder, by name Saunaka. This has reference to an ancient mode of life in India when Saunaka would be called a grihastha, or one who was performing all his duties to his family, his tribe, and his nation while still in the world.

All the while, however, he studied the knowledge of Brahman, so that when the proper time came for him to give up those duties of life, he could either die or retire to solitude. It was not considered then to be a virtue for one to violently sever all ties and assume the garb and life of a mendicant devoted to religious contemplation, but the better way was thought to be that one which resulted in our, so to speak, consuming all the Karma of our family in ourselves. Otherwise it would inevitably result that if he retired with many duties unfulfilled, they waited, figuratively speaking, for him, sure to attach to him in a succeeding incarnation and to work him either injury or obstruction. So it was thought better to work out all such results in the present life as far as possible.

We find here also a foreshadowing of some ideas held by the Greek philosophers. In the third verse, the question is asked: "What is that through which when it is known, the knower thereof knows everything else?" Some of the Greeks said that we must first ascend to the general, from which descent to the particular is easy. Such, however, is directly opposite to the modern method, which delights

in going from particulars to generals, from effects to causes. The true knowledge proceeds as shown in the Upanishad. By endeavoring to attain to the Universal Soul of all, the knowledge of the particular parts may be gained. This is not easy, but it is easy to try. At the same time do not forsake modern methods altogether, which correspond to the lower knowledge spoken of in Verse 5. Therefore Angiras says: Two kinds of knowledge, the lower and the higher, must be known.

Here and there are persons who seem not to need the lower knowledge, who pay no attention to it, and who apprehend the higher flights impossible for others. This is what is known as the result of past births. In previous incarnations these persons studied upon all the lower planes so that their spiritual perceptions do not now need that help and training which the lower knowledge gives to others. They are approaching that state which is beautifully described by Longfellow in his "Rain in Summer," in these words:

> Thus the seer,
> With vision clear,
> Sees forms appear and disappear,
> In the perpetual round of strange,
> Mysterious change
> From birth to death, from death to birth;
> From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth;
> 'Till glimpses more sublime,
> Of things unseen before,
> Unto his wondering eyes reveal
> The Universe, as an immeasurable wheel
> Turning forevermore
> In the rapid and rushing river of Time.

Longfellow, in the lines last quoted, symbolized the Universe by an immeasurable wheel forever turning in the stream of time. Allowing for the western habit of studying effects and not causes, this is a fair simile. Yet it is faulty in that it presupposes two co-existing eternities; the wheel of the Universe, and the stream in which it turns. There can be but one eternity.

Saunaka asks in this Upanishad a natural question, propounded by nearly every thinking man, especially by students of occultism who are continually seeking a royal road to the accomplishment of their objects. He wishes to be told what may be the great solvent of all knowledge. The reply of Angiras points out two great roads, which include all the others. The lower road is the one of hard work for countless births, during which we acquire knowledge slowly

in all directions, and, of course, when that is possessed, one rises to the higher road.

This is the true initiation, nature, so to speak, acting as the initiator. In replying to Saunaka, Angiras did not mean to be understood, that a man could in one birth pass over the lower road, but that the progress of a human monad toward perfection proceeded in a certain fixed manner which included all experiences. Of course if we say that we appear on the earth once only, and then disappear from it, to the place called by the spiritualists of America, "the summer land," and by the christian, "heaven," there is no need for one to acquire the lower knowledge, for that might be obtained in the life after death. But we regard it as true that the spirit, in order to acquire complete knowledge, must inhabit a human form, and one term of tenancy in such a form will not be enough for the testing of the countless varieties of life, of temptation, of triumph, failure and success.

The sage Angiras in this Upanishad looks at man from the standpoint of one who can see the great stream of life which flows through the eternal plain, and therefore he could not have meant to apply his words to one incarnation, but to the whole series through which man has to pass until he reaches "immortal, blest nirvana."

In the journey along this road we will encounter great differences in the powers of our fellow travellers. Some go haltingly and others quickly; some with eyes bent on the ground, a few with gaze fixed on the great goal. Those who halt or look down will not reach the end, because they refuse to take the assistance to be found in the constant aspiration to the light. But we are not to blame them; they have not yet been often enough initiated to understand their error. Nature is kind and will wait for them much longer than their human fellows would if they were permitted to be their judges. This ought to give us a lesson in charity, in universal brotherhood. Very often we meet those who show an utter inability to appreciate some spiritual ideas which we quite understand. It is because they have not, so far, been able to transmute into a part of themselves, that which we have been so fortunate as to become possessed of, and so they seem devoted to things that to us appear to be of small value.

The Bhagavad-Gita says that there is no detriment or loss to one's efforts in any direction, be it good or bad; that is, in going through these countless incarnations, all inquiry, every sort of investigation, no matter even if it seems at the close of any one life

that the life was wasted, is so much energy and experience stored up. For although, in the course of one existence, physical energy is expended, there is, all the while, a storing up of spiritual energy which is again a power in the next succeeding life.

In consequence of the modern, western system of education, we are apt constantly to forget the existence of the great force and value belonging to our super-sensuous consciousness. That consciousness is the great register where we record the real results of our various earthly experiences; in it we store up the spiritual energy, and once stored there, it becomes immortal, our own eternal possession. The question then will be asked: "How is one to store up such spiritual energy: do we do it unconsciously, and how are we to know that any has been stored up?" It is to be done by trying to know and to act truth; by "living in the eternal," as *Light on the Path* directs. To live thus in the eternal, does not mean that we shall abandon the cares and struggles of life, for so surely as we do we must suffer, but that we should try to make the real self direct its aspirations ever to the eternal truth.

This series of births is absolutely necessary, so that the "lower knowledge" can be acquired; and just so long as we do not acquire that, we must be reborn. Here and there will occur exceptions to this rule, in those great souls who, with "an astonishing violence," leap beyond and over all barriers, and by getting the higher knowledge, become at the same time, possessors of the lower knowledge also.

In the Chaldean Oracles such souls are thus described: "More robust souls perceive truth through themselves, and are of a more inventive nature," and by Proklus in I Alkibiad: "such a soul being saved, according to the oracle, through its own strength." But even this rapid progress must be regarded as comparative, for even these "robust souls," had to go through certain incarnations in which they were accumulating to themselves that very strength and ability to outstrip their fellows which, later on, placed them in the front rank.

In consequence of our ignorance of what we really are, not knowing at the time we begin the struggle in this present life whether the real man inside has passed through incarnations full of this necessary experience or not, we must not, because of the fancied importance we give ourselves, neglect the *lower knowledge*. There are many pitfalls besetting the road. Perchance we feel a certain degree of illumination, or we are able to see or hear in the astral world, and at

once the temptation presents itself to claim to ourselves a spiritual greatness not our own. The possession of such astral acuteness is not high spirituality *per se,* for one might be able, as Buddha declares in the Saddharma-Pundarika, to smell the extraordinary odors arising in ten points of space which are not perceived by ordinary people, or to hear the innumerable and strange voices, sounds, bells, discords and harmonies produced by the whole host of unknown and unseen spirits of the earth, air, water and fire, and still be altogether devoid of spirituality. If we let ourselves then, be carried away by this, it is only a form of pride that precedes a severe fall. Being carried away with it, is at once a proof that we are not master, but are mastered by what is merely a novel experience.

But if we wisely and carefully test all experience, being willing to descend low enough to learn and study so that the instrument may be tuned and perfected, we may avoid the pitfalls, or be able to cross them should they be inevitable, whereas if we are deluded by supposed self-illumination, and run after that to the exclusion of all study, we will perhaps enjoy a period of excitement and of self-satisfaction, but it will end, and the end will be bitter. As Buddha says: "He who ignores the rotation of mundane existences, has no perception of blessed rest."

The very fact that a man is in the world and has a continual fight with his passions and inclinations, proves that he is not yet in any condition to leave it. And of even the very far advanced, it was said by those who were near the time of the Upanishads:

"The disciple who by his discrimination has escaped from the triple world, thinks he has reached pure, blessed nirvana; but it is only by knowing all the laws of the lower world, and the universal laws as well, that the immortal, pure, blest nirvana is reached. There is no real nirvana without all-knowingness; try to reach this."

By F.T.S.

These notes are not technical studies of forms of speech, but simply attempts to discover the true meaning underlying the words of the Upanishads. These ancient works are full of food for reflection; they should be studied with a view of finding the inner meaning, and without being influenced by the fact that they are cast in a form which is strange to us. This caution is especially needful in the case of Hindu books, because the Indian is fond of expressing

himself in a form totally different from that of his Western brother.

In 1886 I made a few references in these pages to the *Mundaka Upanishad,* which is often known as the one which shaves off error so that the truth may shine or be apparent, and shall now proceed a little further in the same direction. This Upanishad is divided into chapters or sections which are called "mundakas" and "khandas," the last being the smaller divisions included in the former: a "khanda" would therefore be something like our "section."

Thus we have:

FIRST MUNDAKA, SECOND KHANDA

1. This is the truth: the sacrificial works which they saw in the hymns of the Veda have been performed in many ways in the Tretâ age. Practise them diligently, ye lovers of truth; this is your path that leads to the world of good works."

From the first verse to the end of the sixth there are statements and descriptions relating to the flames from the sacrifice and about the effects of good works, ending with these words:

"This is thy holy Brahma world—swarga—gained by thy good works."

All of these mean to inculcate that *swarga* or heaven will be gained by good works, which are here also called sacrifices or the attentive following of the Brahmanical law. Both in the fifth and sixth verses heaven or devachan is referred to, in the one as the place "where the one lord of the devas dwells," and in the other as "swarga." Indra is "the one lord of the devas," and his place, known as "Indra loka," is devachan or the land of the gods.

Indra's heaven is not eternal. The only loka admitted by the Hindu sacred books to be nondestructible is "Goloka" or the place of Krishna. Those who go to devachan have to emerge from that state when the energies that took them there are exhausted. In the Bhagavad-Gita this is thus put: "When the reward is exhausted after having dwelt in the heaven of Indra for years of infinite number, they return to the world of mortals." But even if one should become Indra himself, who is the regent of this sphere, the reward would not be eternal, for the reason that Indra as a power comes to an end at the close of the manvantara. The Khanda under consideration touches upon the transitory nature of the reward for good works without knowledge in the seventh and other verses:

7. But frail indeed are these boats, the sacrifices, the eighteen, in which this lower ceremonial has been told. Fools who praise

this as the highest good are subject again and again to old age and death.

8. Fools dwell in darkness, wise in their own conceit and puffed up with a vain knowledge, go round and round, staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind.

9. Children when they have long lived in ignorance consider themselves happy. Because those who depend on their good works are improvident, owing to their passions, they fall and become miserable when their life in the world which they have gained by their good works is finished.

The fall spoken of in these and also in the tenth is the death in devachan and rebirth into this life. Both life here and life in devachan are illusionary, and hence there is a continual rise and fall, fall and rise, from the one to the other until the time arrives when the man, by adding knowledge to good works, is able to mount above the illusion and prevent himself from being drawn into the gulf of death in either this world or the world of the devas. It must follow from this that such a perfected man may, while living among men, have the experiences of devachan, if that be his wish; in Buddha's life it is said that he entered nirvana and carried on his mission upon earth afterwards.

Verse II, referring to those hermits called Sannyasis who have left all concerns of this world behind, has this significant sentence:

"[Those] depart free from passion, through the sun, to where that immortal person dwells whose nature is imperishable."

I am very much inclined to read this as meaning that even in their case what might be called absolute immortality is not gained.

The Hindu philosophy is full of fine distinctions, and, indeed, so is occultism. To say that "they go to that place where the highest person dwells" is not the same as saying they become that person himself. In the Bhagavad-Gita Krishna says that only a certain sort of devotion causes the devotee to become the highest person, or, to put it in other words, to be absorbed in the highest. In the present case the Sannyasi goes to the place but does not become that highest person. And in saying "absolute immortality" I have in view the immense periods of time covered by the cycles of the Hindus, which are so long that they seem the same as eternity to us, and are often construed to have that meaning, giving to the term a shorter or lesser significance than we give it. This can be noticed in the sentence quoted from the Bhagavad-Gita in the use of the word "infinite," as there it does not mean never-ending, but only an enormous period

of time, so immense that the human mind is not able to conceive it and therefore has to call it eternal. The "departure through the sun" is a reference to that part of the hidden-teachings of the Hindu initiates which deals with the practical part of yoga, the ways and means for developing the higher powers and faculties, all of which are governed and affected by certain forces and centers of force in the system of which this globe is a part. Even this has its counterpart in the Bhagavad-Gita in that chapter where it is said that the devotee who dies when the sun is in its northern course goes away never to return, and that the one who dies when the moon is waxing goes but to return again, ending with the statement that these two ways of white and black are eternally decreed in this world. This has been commented on by Europeans as being nonsense, but when we know that reference is meant to be made to the eternal unity of the great tides in human affairs and the adjustment of all things to universal laws, it does not seem so foolish. Of course if it be taken to apply to all men indiscriminately, then it would be the talk of children; but it is well known to all those who have had a glimmer of the inner meaning of these holy books that the persons who come under the influence of this law in the manner above given are only those devotees who follow the practices enjoined and thus bring into operation upon themselves different forces from those that bear upon the ordinary man.

In the next verse directions are given for finding the truth as:

> 12. Let a Brahmana[4] after he has examined all these worlds which are gained by works acquire freedom from all desires. Nothing that is eternal (or not made) can be gained by that which is not eternal (or made). Let him in order to understand this take fuel in his hands and approach a guru who is learned and dwells entirely in Brahman, and that teacher tells the truth to him.

Verse 13 ends this khanda leading to the second Mundaka wherein the truth about these matters is to be found.

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[4] A "Brahmana" here does not exclude non-brahmans, but means the man who is on Brahma's path, who is studying the wisdom of or about Brahma or spirit.

He who knows others is learned; he who knows himself is wise.

—THE WISDOM OF LAOTSE

letters • questions • comment

Karma and Reincarnation are certainly reasonable ideas, yet it sometimes seems that faith is what is really required. How, for example, can an artist console himself with the thought that the present limitation on his capacity to make his work equal his inspiration may be removed in some future life, when he will accomplish a more perfect embodiment of his ideal?

Whatever the application of Karma and Reincarnation to this question, no artist worth his salt would ever allow himself to live in the future to such an extent. There is a sense in which the true artist, like the philosopher, must learn to do the best he can with the materials at hand, knowing through some basic intuition that his visioning will *always* outrun his concrete achievements and that nothing could be worse for the creative spirit than the realization that some "final" goal or perfection had been reached.

Karma and Reincarnation are metaphysical conceptions throwing a great light on the symmetries of existence. They bear on the apparent anomalies of life, the seeming injustices, and what is bound to appear to many as the sheer senselessness of some forms of experience. These teachings extend the range of meaning and balance of human life from a single incarnation to a period which is really beyond measure, including a great many embodiments of the soul. They are the basis of the teaching of egoic evolution and go to the root of the individual's attitude toward himself, his experience, and the world.

Acceptance of Karma is not simply the recognition of cause and effect, but the growing appreciation that it pervades the whole of our complex, ever-changing natures. Perhaps this is also included in what H.P.B. meant in *The Key to Theosophy* when, in answer to the query of where a Theosophist should look for strength to control his nature, she said, "To his Higher Self, the divine spirit, or the God in him, and to his *Karma*."

But what, it should also be asked, is the source of that discontent spoken of in the question which throws into painful relief the dif-

ference between vision and performance? There is, of course, that insight which is the natural result of a thing well done which leads us on to further conquests in consequence of our having outgrown former limitations. And there is the restlessness born of the perception that we *can* do better and must make haste to try. But that discontent which arises from a misunderstanding of the true nature of perfection often beguiles us into comparing our own potentialities as human beings with the *achievements* of others. The result may be either a sense of arrogance with regard to one's accomplishments or a feeling of despair. In a culture that measures success in terms of tangible results, this is a subtle temptation that is hard to avoid. It may be recognized finally as the clamor of the personal man for nourishment solely in its own interest—results *now*. Or it may be the perception that something is deeply wrong for which our Karma has provided us no means of expression but the despair of the lower nature.

But again, we should ask ourselves what kind of perfection is worthy of constant devotion. There are certainly some results which represent a kind of perfection for a particular time and place. They have excellence only because they in some way fulfill the needs of the present situation. And, in the sense that they do this, they are also of a transitory nature. If they are admired out of season, they cease to be perfections and may, even though not appearing to change, become a barrier to fresh accomplishment.

On the other hand, if we are also the Self, eternity is not only in some past time or some far-distant future, it is now; and perhaps the excellence which we justly admire, but vainly pursue, is the proper fruition of some other time. Meanwhile there are possibilities of the present moment, perhaps requiring more effort to discern and appreciate, but nevertheless representing the opportunities created by us through past causation. But that devotion which seeks the eternal in experience that is transitory, knowing that the eternal and the fleeting are not the same, and that which pursues the transitory *as if it were* the eternal, are vastly different. For that which nourishes the reincarnating ego, increasing its understanding and sympathy even while it comes to better appreciate the illusive character of experience is to be found in any Karma if seen from the standpoint of the Ego. In his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, Mr. Judge spoke to this point in describing the position of Arjuna in consenting to undertake the battle before him:

Krishna addresses his disciple Arjuna in these terms: "Unto thee who findeth no fault, I will now make known this most mysterious knowledge, coupled with a realization of it, which having known thou shalt be delivered from evil." The words "Unto thee who findeth no fault" mean that Arjuna is recognized as one who understands that Law rules in everything and every circumstance, and that nothing can come to him of good or of evil, but that of which he himself was the cause; thus he accepted the good without exultation and the evil without complaint; in other words, Arjuna was equal-minded in pain or pleasure, joy or sorrow, and stood ready to suffer or enjoy whatever the Higher Self had in store for him by way of experience or discipline. Thus at the outset Krishna propounds and Arjuna accepts the rule of Law, as a necessary step towards further enlightenment.

Involved in attempting to live in the eternal and fulfill the obligations of each moment is a kind of accomplishment which far transcends, though it may include, lesser skills and talents. It is the fruition of that resolve which determines that perfection shall be striven for only so that all other beings may be the better able to share it.

STATEMENTS ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE

What I know, I give out; that which I cannot explain, the student must find out for himself.
—H. P. BLAVATSKY

SECRET DOCTRINE is the general name given to the esoteric teachings of antiquity. It is needless to explain that this book is not the Secret Doctrine in its entirety, but a select number of fragments of its fundamental tenets, special attention being paid to some facts which have been seized upon by various writers, and distorted out of all resemblance to truth.

The main body of the Doctrines given is found scattered throughout hundreds and thousands of Sanskrit MSS., some already translated—disfigured in their interpretations, as usual—others still awaiting their turn. One of the greatest, and, withal, the most serious objection to the correctness and reliability of the whole work will be the preliminary STANZAS: "How can the statements contained in them be verified?" True, if a great portion of the Sanskrit, Chinese, and Mongolian works quoted in the present volumes are known to some Orientalists, the chief work—that one from which the Stanzas are given—is not in the possession of European Libraries. The Book of Dzyan (or "Dzan") is utterly unknown to our Philologists, or at any rate was never heard of by them under its present name.

Volume I of "Isis" begins with a reference to "an old book." The "very old Book" is the original work from which the many volumes of *Kiu-ti* were compiled. Not only this latter and the *Siphrah Dzeniouta* but even the *Sepher Jezirah,* the book of *Shuking,* China's primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Purânas in India, and the Chaldean *Book of Numbers* and the *Pentateuch* itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume. Tradition says, that it was taken down in *Senzar,* the secret sacerdotal tongue, from the words of Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the 5th (our) race; for there was a time when its language (the *Sen-zar*) was known to the Initiates of every nation, when the forefathers of the Toltec understood it as easily as the

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NOTE.—A student's collation from *The Secret Doctrine.*

inhabitants of the lost Atlantis, who inherited it, in their turn, from the sages of the 3rd Race, the *Manushis,* who learnt it direct from the *Devas* of the 2nd and 1st Races.

The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system: e.g., even in the exotericism of the Puranas. But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs.

The attempt to render in a European tongue the grand panorama of the ever periodically recurring Law—impressed upon the plastic minds of the first races endowed with Consciousness by those who reflected the same from the Universal Mind—is daring, for no human language, save the Sanskrit—which is that *of the Gods*—can do so with any degree of adequacy. It is not taught in any of the six Indian schools of philosophy, for it pertains to their synthesis—the seventh, which is the Occult doctrine. It is not traced on any crumbling papyrus of Egypt, nor is it any longer graven on Assyrian tile or granite wall. The Books of the *Vedanta* (the last word of human knowledge) give out but the metaphysical aspect of this world-Cosmogony; and their priceless thesaurus, the *Upanishads* —*Upa-ni-shad* being a compound word meaning "the conquest of ignorance by the revelation of the *secret, spiritual* knowledge"—require now the additional possession of a Master-key to enable the student to get at their full meaning.

In Century the Twentieth some disciple more informed, and far better fitted, may be sent by the Masters of Wisdom to give final and irrefutable proofs that there exists a Science called *Gupta-Vidya;* and that, like the once mysterious sources of the Nile, the source of all religions and philosophies now known to the world has been for many ages forgotten and lost to men, but is at last found.

Modern science believes not in the "soul of things," and hence will reject the whole system of ancient cosmogony. It is useless to say that the system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals. That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race

to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity. That for long ages, the "Wise Men" of the Fifth Race, of the stock saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents, had passed their lives *in learning, not teaching*. But, the day when much, if not all, of that which is given here from the archaic records, will be found correct, is not far distant.

Having never claimed infallibility, that which is given on the writer's authority may leave much to be desired, in the very abstruse cases where too deep metaphysic is involved. The teaching is offered as understood; and as there are seven keys of interpretation to every symbol and allegory, that which may not fit a meaning, say from the psychological or astronomical aspect, will be found quite correct from the physical or metaphysical. Facts are there, and they can hardly be denied. But, owing to the intrinsic difficulties of the subjects treated, and the almost insurmountable limitation of the English tongue (as of all other European languages) to express certain ideas, it is more than probable that the writer has failed to present the explanations in the best and in the clearest form; yet all that could be done was done under every adverse circumstance, and this is the utmost that can be expected of any writer.

Occult philosophy divulges few of its most important vital mysteries. It drops them like precious pearls, one by one, far and wide apart, and only when forced to do so by the evolutionary tidal wave that carries on humanity slowly, silently, but steadily toward the dawn of the Sixth-Race mankind. For once out of the safe custody of their legitimate heirs and keepers, those mysteries cease to be occult; they fall into the public domain and have to run the risk of becoming in the hands of the selfish—of the *Cains* of the human race—curses more often than blessings.

The Secret Doctrine teaches no *Atheism,* except in the Hindu sense of the word *nastika,* or the rejection of *idols,* including every anthropomorphic god. In this sense every Occultist is a *Nastika.* Without throwing any discredit upon time-honoured beliefs, in whatever direction, we are forced to draw a marked line between blind faith, evolved by theologies, and knowledge due to the independent researches of long generations of adepts; between, in short, faith and philosophy. There have been—in all ages—undeniably learned and good men who, having been reared in sectarian beliefs, died in their crystallized convictions. For Protestants, the garden

of Eden is the primeval point of departure in the drama of Humanity, and the solemn tragedy on the summit of Calvary, the prelude to the hoped-for Millennium. For Roman Catholics, Satan is at the foundation of Kosmos, Christ in its centre, and Antichrist at its apex. For both, the Hierarchy of Being begins and ends within the narrow frames of their respective theologies: one self-created *personal* God and an Empyrean ringing with the Hallelujas of *created* angels; the rest, *false* gods, Satan and fiends.

Every old religion is but a chapter of the entire volume of archaic primeval mysteries—Eastern *Occultism* alone being able to boast that it is in possession of the full secret, with its *seven* keys. But while supposing that the whole cycle of the universal mystery language will not be mastered for whole centuries to come, even that which has been hitherto discovered in the Bible by some scholars is quite sufficient to demonstrate the claim—mathematically.

The hour has now struck to ascertain whether the walls of the modern Jericho are so impregnable that no blast of the Occult trumpet is ever likely to make them crumble. Science cannot, owing to the very nature of things, unveil the mystery of the universe around us. Science can, it is true, collect, classify, and generalize upon phenomena; but the occultist, arguing from admitted metaphysical data, declares that the daring explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer his consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes. To effect this, he must develop faculties which are absolutely dormant—save in a few rare and exceptional cases—in the constitution of the offshoots of our present Fifth Root-race in Europe and America. He can in no other conceivable manner collect the facts on which to base his speculations. Is this not apparent on the principle of Inductive Logic and Metaphysics alike?

One feels a serious doubt whether, with all its intellectual acuteness, our age is destined to discover in each western nation even one solitary *uninitiated* scholar or philosopher capable of fully comprehending the spirit of archaic philosophy. But, we write for the future.

No disbeliever who takes the "Secret Doctrine" for a "hoax" is forced or even asked to credit our statements. Nor, is it after all, necessary that any one should believe in the Occult Sciences and the old teachings, before one knows anything or even believes in

his own soul. No great truth was ever accepted *a priori,* and generally a century or two passed before it began to glimmer in the human consciousness as a possible verity, except in such cases as the positive discovery of the thing claimed as a fact. The truths of today are the falsehoods and errors of yesterday, and *vice versa.* It is only in the twentieth century that portions, if not the whole, of the present work will be vindicated.

The ancient adepts have solved the great problems of science, however unwilling modern materialism may be to admit the fact. The mysteries of Life and Death *were* fathomed by the great masterminds of antiquity; and if they have preserved them in secrecy and silence, it is because these problems formed part of the sacred mysteries; and, secondly, because they must have remained incomprehensible to the vast majority of men then, as they do now.

Nor is there any need of proselytizing. As remarked by the wise Cicero, "Time destroys the speculations of man, but it confirms the judgment of nature." Let us bide our time. Meanwhile, it is not in the human constitution to witness in silence the destruction of one's gods, whether they be true or false. And as theology and materialism have combined together to destroy the old gods of antiquity and seek to disfigure every old philosophical conception, it is but just that the lovers of old wisdom should defend their position, by proving that the whole arsenal of the two is, at best, formed of new weapons made out of very old material.

But no true theosophist, from the most ignorant up to the most learned, ought to claim infallibility for anything he may say or write upon occult matters. Again, the reader can never be too often reminded that, as the abundant quotations from various old Scriptures prove, these teachings are as old as the world; and that the present work is a simple attempt to render, in modern language, and in a phraseology with which the scientific and educated student is familiar, archaic Genesis and History as taught in certain Asiatic centers of esoteric learning. They must be accepted or rejected on their own merits, fully or partially; but not before they have been carefully compared with the corresponding theological dogmas and the modern scientific theories and speculations.

on the lookout

Zeal Not Enough

Saturday Review for Sept. 18 evaluates American efforts to adopt the educational methods developed in English infant schools. Techniques which have been applied in England with obvious success have not produced favorable results in the United States. Flexibility in classroom structure has often turned into chaos; student-initiated activities have become aimless. In an article titled "The Open Classroom: Protect It from Its Friends," Marilyn Hapgood considers what may be some of the reasons:

> What has gone wrong? Partly, of course, there are problems that arise from crossing the Atlantic, a too literal aping of English practices without recognizing the real differences between English institutions and our own. Yet the root of the problem is the attempt of American zealots to accomplish instant reform —to arrive by one giant step at a kind of education that it has taken many small steps over many years to achieve in England, with many more still to be taken. We cannot reach anything like the English achievement without fully understanding the principles on which it is based, without going through the necessary process of preparation, and without developing the supportive methods to foster it.

Everybody Teaches

According to Miss Hapgood, one of these supportive methods is a "subtle kind of structuring—in which more freedom and responsibility are gradually built in for the children." Without this inner structure, the teacher finds that liberty "soon becomes license—chaotic, noisy, and unsatisfactory for the children as well as herself."

Also important is the attitude on the part of English teachers that problems and failures are a constructive part of their education, too. This, together with the active support of administration and parents, provides teachers with a secure sense of purpose and confidence in eventual success. On the role of the administration as "active support," Miss Hapgood observes:

> The English headmistress is not an "administrator" in the

> American sense. She is the head teacher, a master teacher. She is given remarkable autonomy in determining educational policy and practice in her school. Yet the most successful heads are anything but autocrats. They work closely with their staffs, often teaching alongside a teacher in a classroom. In fact, an outstanding English school is a team-teaching effort in the most profound sense, whether or not, as is rarely the case, the walls have been knocked out and classes thrown together.

Teacher-Pupil Relation

The relationship between classroom teacher and student is, of course, central. This writer says:

> That is the real heart of the matter, and the best English teachers are masters of a very subtle rapport with their students. One could never describe them as "pals." The language and tone of the teacher are friendly and at the same time clinical, implying the superiority of the teacher's *experience*.

Weekend courses in crafts, music, poetry, and mathematics, help provide teachers with the wide competence they need for this kind of teaching. Conducted in a workshop framework, they also place the teacher in the position of the child, as a learner in the informal classroom setting which the teacher is also attempting to master more fully.

Neglect of John Dewey

In a book review in the same issue of *SR* Edward Yeomans has a pertinent comment on the human tendency to seek immediate and "sure" results by copying what appears to be a good technique:

> Pedagogy, in the sense of "how students learn," was at the heart of progressive education and certainly of one of Dewey's greatest books, *Democracy and Education*. Had Americans clung more resolutely to this indigenous thinking, and had we been less put off by superficial or bizarre interpretations of it, we might have developed a momentum of our own without having to rediscover, through British experiences, what we were beginning to understand thirty years ago.

Perhaps it could be justly observed that all such efforts as the current movement to open classrooms, the writings of Dewey in the thirties, and of Ivan Illich in our own generation testify to one underlying factor: the recognition that an inherent order does exist in the mysterious process of education, even though it does not submit to duplication or mechanical applications. It includes relationships of genuine involvement, the ability to put oneself in the

place of another, and the concept of education as something very different from correcting the errors of others.

Intelligence in Education

In reviewing a book of essays on *Children's Rights,* in the *New York Review of Books* (Sept. 23), Paul Goodman makes some observations on relationships between adults and children. His comment suggests that the basic right of children is to be treated as people, not as objects upon whom demands can be made—demands that are in no sense in their interests—or as dependents for whom too much is often done:

> Philosophically, the right relationship among children, adolescents, and adults—groups that are so unlike and yet like and that make up one community—is a pluralism: in some areas they should leave one another severely alone; in other areas they need, use, and enjoy one another, can make demands, and have obligations. The really interesting facts of life have to do with opportunities, dangers, and limits of how grownups and children can get something from one another. Yet it is rare that this prima facie and commonsense point of view is taken by our present liberators and school reformers.

The Best Thing We Could Do

The meeting ground, according to Goodman, is that of a common task serving a real need, perceived by both master and apprentice, each in his own way. He says:

> Many, perhaps most, craftsmen, professionals, scholars, and savants need young apprentices, to see the tasks afresh through young eyes, to pass on the art as it was earlier passed on to them. But, in the relation of master and apprentice, the key is certainly not the freedom and rights of the young, nor the therapy of the young, but the often harsh discipline of the craft and the objective nature of things. It is these that give identity and dignity and, finally, freedom.

But the area in which each is "severely alone" turns out to be also the basis for productive relationships—skill in the performance of one's own duty:

> A sign of the confusion of modern times is that we all pay too much attention to children, either depriving them of rights and freedom or trying to give them rights and freedom. . . . I would suggest, as a program for the coming decade, that the best thing we adults could do for children and adolescents would be to renovate our own institutions and give the young a livable world to grow up in.

"Photosensitivity"

Greater use of flickering lights from a variety of sources is held responsible for what doctors call "environmental epilepsy." According to a report in the Los Angeles *Times* (Aug. 8), this ill is on the increase in the United States:

> "Photosensitivity," as this susceptibility is termed in scientific circles, may be a good deal commoner than has been supposed, according to the newsmagazine for physicians, *Medical World News*. In a survey article on environmental epilepsy, *MWN* says as many as one out of four persons may carry the hereditary trait for photosensitivity, although the vast majority suffer no ill effects.
>
> Females are considerably more susceptible than males, and the attacks they experience are usually the milder form of epilepsy called petit mal, which involves only temporary loss of consciousness and none of the violent physical seizures that characterize grand mal attacks.

Cause of Seizures

Sources capable of triggering such reactions, while not inescapable, can be identified and often avoided:

> According to Drs. Robinson D. Harley and Roger D. Freeman at Temple University in Philadelphia, "an increasing number of light-sensitive children may be provoked into seizures as exposure to flickering light increases in modern life.
>
> Television viewing . . . amateur cinematography and fluorescent lighting are but a few common sources of periodic, repetitive light.
>
> Laboratory experiments have shown that petit mal attacks can be induced in certain individuals by cycling lights on and off at a critical rate. Electroencephalograms produce brain-wave tracings that show what is going on in the subject's brain.

In view of the fact that H.P. Blavatsky described epilepsy as one of the first signs of mediumistic tendencies, the appearance of this susceptibility as an almost random characteristic seems to be one more symptom of the wave of psychism now gathering strength.

Resourceful Grasshopper

Disconcerting evidence of the adaptive intelligence of even the simplest organisms in nature, discussed so extensively by H. P. Blavatsky in her articles "Kosmic Mind" and "Psychic and Noëtic Action," is reported in the Los Angeles *Times* (Aug. 1). Dr. Lawrence Hendry, of Penn State, told the *Times* that he and three col-

leagues from Cornell had discovered that a grasshopper they were studying had synthesized a new chemical ingredient from man-made insecticides and incorporated it into its own defense-mechanism. The scientists made the discovery while examining the defensive froth of a small, flightless grasshopper, *romalea microptera.* The report quotes Dr. Hendry:

> We found the usual range of gaseous components common to froths, clouds and other defensive sprays. But when we isolated 2,5 dichlorophenol we were astounded. That compound is not found in nature. We could only speculate that the grasshopper gleaned it from the fields by chemically processing another man-made compound, 2,4 dichlorophenoxyacetic, or 2,4,D, a common commercial herbicide.

Grasshoppers taken from fields not sprayed did not contain the chemical. Commenting, Dr. Hendry said: "Over a short time period, the grasshopper has managed to latch onto a man-made chemical for its own purposes. It is not very pleasant to speculate what might happen after a wide variety of hard chemicals have been in common use for a hundred years." Conceivably, an entirely new approach to agriculture is required, involving smaller gardens and more natural protection from pests.

Awakening Scientific Conscience

Whether the Orwellian dreams of biologists of prefabricating human organisms and exercising almost total control over heredity are ever realized or not, the possibilities presented by recent discoveries seem to have precipitated a healthy questioning of the validity of scientific research for its own sake. An article in the *New York Times* (March 28), surveying the field of moral dilemmas, says in part:

> Underlying the new ethical concern is a conviction that the authority of science, like that of the universities, the churches and the military, must increasingly come into question.
>
> Scientists and others are now asking whether scientific progress necessarily serves the good of man and, in cases where it obviously does, whether scientists should be the only ones to determine the direction it takes. There is, in short, a growing consensus that the consequences of science are too important to be left to the scientists.

Although some investigators still feel that involving the public in the determination of moral issues connected with research medicine would limit the freedom of researchers, others maintain that

the public should have a voice. As Dr. Leon Kass remarked, "We're talking about changing the bodies and minds of men. Scientists are not peculiar repositories of wisdom on these matters."

Mind Distinct from Brain

Further evidence of broadened perspectives in scientific attitudes is found in a *Newsweek* interview with Nobel Prize winner Sir John Eccles (June 21). *Newsweek* reports:

> Despite (or perhaps because of) his half century of experience as an explorer of the physical brain, Eccles steadfastly refuses to accept the notion held by many of his colleagues—that the brain and the mind are one. He still thinks they are separate and distinct, and ventures into epistemology in explaining himself. "I can explain my body and my brain," he says, "but there's something more. I can't explain my own existence. What makes me a unique being?"
>
> Eccles insists that this line of thinking is not invoking the supernatural, but that it is rather "making a play for honesty." He goes on: "We should not pretend that consciousness is not a mystery. People are looking for packaged answers. There are none." . . . "If we are still essentially automatons," he says, "then all moral judgments are phony. How can Calley be blamed for anything he does? Is there anything more than training? Are we only playthings of chance? This is what I resist."

Perhaps such indications of the loosening grip of scientific dogmatism are part of what H.P.B. meant by her prediction that the liberalizing of scientific views would come about, not so much through overwhelming philosophical argument, as by a "ninth wave of common sense."

Doctors on Death

Two articles in *Science* for Aug. 20 argue the meaning of death in relation to the practice of medicine. Dr. Robert S. Morison, author of "Death: Process or Event" sums up one position:

> Squirm as we may to avoid the inevitable, it seems time to admit to ourselves that there is simply no hiding place and that we must shoulder the responsibility of deciding to act in such a way as to hasten the declining trajectories of some lives, while doing our best to slow down the decline of others. And we have to do this on the basis of some judgment on the quality of the lives in question.

What Is "Death"?

In "Death as an Event," Dr. Leon Kass takes exception to the

claim by Dr. Morison that death is not an event in itself, but simply part of a continuing process. Dr. Kass points to the distinction between the death of an organism as a unified entity and the death of its component parts. He says:

> If there is a natural distinction between living and nonliving things, what is the proper way of stating the nature of that difference? What is the real difference between something alive and that "same" something dead? . . . The real source of our confusion about death is probably our confusion about living things. The death of an organism is not understandable because its "aliveness" is not understood except in terms of nonliving matter and motion.

Dr. Kass continues:

> In considering the definition and determination of death, we note that there is a difference between the meaning of an abstract concept such as death (or mass or gravity or time) and the operations used to determine or measure it. There are two "definitions" that should not be confused. There is the conceptual "definition" or meaning and the operational "definition" or meaning. I think it would be desirable to use "definition of death" only with respect to the first, and to speak of "criteria for determining that a death has occurred" for the second.

Man Is Not a "Thing"

These seem particularly useful distinctions to make, even if their impact may be lost on the general reader. The first writer in this "debate" proposes that it may become the responsibility of the physician to hasten the death of some persons, doubtless out of consideration for what seems useless suffering. Dr. Kass suggests that we do not really know what death is, and that being able to say that an organism is no longer alive by no means qualifies us to define death, which remains quite as mysterious as life itself. To convert the meaning of death into a mere physical process is to neglect subjective realities of which we know very little, and to brush aside the right of the individual to die in his own time, without suffering the indignity of being treated as a "thing." While Dr. Kass's argument is abstract, it nonetheless leaves open the door to thoughts about the indwelling ego. This seems an adequate philosophical generosity, when it is remembered that Dr. Kass writes for *Science* and seeks agreement from a wide range of scientific opinion.

"Life" in the Milky Way?

The Long Beach (Calif.) *Press-Telegram* for July 15 reports that

a scientist at the California Institute of Technology has discovered the presence of a hydroxyl radical in two remote galaxies, each ten light years away. This radical consists of one atom each of hydrogen and oxygen, and when an additional hydrogen atom is attached, the result is a molecule of water. Finding in the Milky Way the hydroxyl and other elements essential to organisms is regarded as further evidence of the existence of life in other parts of the universe, and as a possible clue to the origin of life as we know it on this planet. However, it seems well to remember, as H.P.B. suggests in *The Secret Doctrine,* that while life naturally exists throughout the universe, it would be unrealistic to expect any uniformity in structure or processes with what prevails on earth, conditions in outer space being quite different from what they are here. Moreover, the universe probably contains a far greater variety of beings than those of which we are at present aware. So, although the accumulation of such evidence on the part of scientists may indeed broaden the mental horizons of the popular mind, it is not a reliable clue to the composition of the universe or the origin of life.

Guarding the First Amendment

The laborious process of defining the separation of Church and State continues with two decisions handed down by the Supreme Court last June (*Saturday Review,* Aug. 21). The court declared unconstitutional certain programs in the states of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania which granted substantial aid to private schools for "secular services." Among them were funds for teachers' salaries, text books, and other course materials. Although both States included restrictions in their plans, providing that the money would be spent only for secular purposes, the court ruled that such restrictions would involve the state in a minute surveillance which would itself constitute "excessive entanglement" of government with religion, thus violating the First Amendment. Despite the fact that these rulings were nearly unanimous, another decision approving construction grants on campuses of private colleges tended to becloud their clarity. It might be added that while the Church-State issue now revolves chiefly around parochial schools, the court's action should help to discourage the exodus of children from public to private schools as an alternative to racial integration of public schools.

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> If there is a natural distinction between living and nonliving things, what is the proper way of stating the nature of that difference? What is the real difference between something alive and that "same" something dead? . . . The real source of our confusion about death is probably our confusion about living things. The death of an organism is not understandable because its "aliveness" is not understood except in terms of nonliving matter and motion.

Dr. Kass continues:

> In considering the definition and determination of death, we note that there is a difference between the meaning of an abstract concept such as death (or mass or gravity or time) and the operations used to determine or measure it. There are two "definitions" that should not be confused. There is the conceptual "definition" or meaning and the operational "definition" or meaning. I think it would be desirable to use "definition of death" only with respect to the first, and to speak of "criteria for determining that a death has occurred" for the second.

Man Is Not a "Thing"

These seem particularly useful distinctions to make, even if their impact may be lost on the general reader. The first writer in this "debate" proposes that it may become the responsibility of the physician to hasten the death of some persons, doubtless out of consideration for what seems useless suffering. Dr. Kass suggests that we do not really know what death is, and that being able to say that an organism is no longer alive by no means qualifies us to define death, which remains quite as mysterious as life itself. To convert the meaning of death into a mere physical process is to neglect subjective realities of which we know very little, and to brush aside the right of the individual to die in his own time, without suffering the indignity of being treated as a "thing." While Dr. Kass's argument is abstract, it nonetheless leaves open the door to thoughts about the indwelling ego. This seems an adequate philosophical generosity, when it is remembered that Dr. Kass writes for *Science* and seeks agreement from a wide range of scientific opinion.

"Life" in the Milky Way?

The Long Beach (Calif.) *Press-Telegram* for July 15 reports that

a scientist at the California Institute of Technology has discovered the presence of a hydroxyl radical in two remote galaxies, each ten light years away. This radical consists of one atom each of hydrogen and oxygen, and when an additional hydrogen atom is attached, the result is a molecule of water. Finding in the Milky Way the hydroxyl and other elements essential to organisms is regarded as further evidence of the existence of life in other parts of the universe, and as a possible clue to the origin of life as we know it on this planet. However, it seems well to remember, as H.P.B. suggests in *The Secret Doctrine,* that while life naturally exists throughout the universe, it would be unrealistic to expect any uniformity in structure or processes with what prevails on earth, conditions in outer space being quite different from what they are here. Moreover, the universe probably contains a far greater variety of beings than those of which we are at present aware. So, although the accumulation of such evidence on the part of scientists may indeed broaden the mental horizons of the popular mind, it is not a reliable clue to the composition of the universe or the origin of life.

Guarding the First Amendment

The laborious process of defining the separation of Church and State continues with two decisions handed down by the Supreme Court last June (*Saturday Review,* Aug. 21). The court declared unconstitutional certain programs in the states of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania which granted substantial aid to private schools for "secular services." Among them were funds for teachers' salaries, text books, and other course materials. Although both States included restrictions in their plans, providing that the money would be spent only for secular purposes, the court ruled that such restrictions would involve the state in a minute surveillance which would itself constitute "excessive entanglement" of government with religion, thus violating the First Amendment. Despite the fact that these rulings were nearly unanimous, another decision approving construction grants on campuses of private colleges tended to becloud their clarity. It might be added that while the Church-State issue now revolves chiefly around parochial schools, the court's action should help to discourage the exodus of children from public to private schools as an alternative to racial integration of public schools.

Threat of Vaccination

The Los Angeles *Times* (Sept. 20) reports that the United States Public Health Service no longer recommends routine smallpox vaccinations. According to Dr. David J. Sencer, head of the health service's center for disease control, the danger from adverse reactions to the vaccine is now greater than the threat of the disease itself. He said that about six Americans die every year from the shots, while there have been no cases of smallpox in the United States since 1949. Although the World Health Organization, an agency of the United Nations, does not advocate abolition of vaccination officially, its statement at least recognizes that significant alternative methods exist for the control of the disease through proper sanitation. Its spokesman said:

> For countries such as those where the network of health services is extensive and surveillance systems are well developed, the decision to abolish routine vaccination bears only a limited risk.

It is well known that there has been a general decline in infectious diseases since the nineteenth century, often without any particular advance in therapy. Further, it was long ago established by research that very few of the immunological serums have proved of any lasting value. As Dr. W. H. Manwaring wrote in *Science* for July 5, 1929: "No immunological hypothesis of the past half-century has had a clinical verification of more than 5 per cent." There has, however, been considerable progress in sanitation, which may account in part for the reduction of the incidence of infectious diseases. While the health departments of the urban centers of the nation may be a long way from declaring the superiority of natural immunity over the artificial immunity so hazardously provided by vaccines and serums, there is at least progress in this recognition that preventive measures taken against smallpox have worse effects than the disease and are no longer recommended.